



## Georgia Board for Physician Workforce Supply, Specialty Mix & Distribution of the Physician Workforce September 2017

There are many factors impacting physician supply, specialty mix, and distribution of physicians in Georgia. In Georgia, 37% of medical school graduates who attend high school and a GME program stated they plan to remain in Georgia to practice (3). Nationally Georgia ranked 17<sup>th</sup> for percent of physicians retained from both UME and GME programs (8). Georgia medical school graduates matched to a Georgia GME program at a rate of 22.7%. An aging physician population, physician retention, and rural hospital closures all have a significant impact on the physician workforce. It has not yet been determined what effect if any the political healthcare climate will have on the physician workforce in Georgia.

### Physician Supply

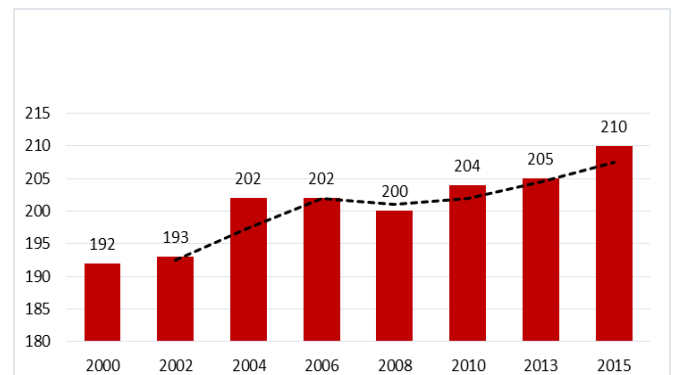
#### Georgia achieved growth in the following areas:

- Georgia has seen growth in the number of physicians per capita. The state now has 210 practicing physicians per 100,000 population, an increase of 2.4 since 2013.
- Georgia ranked 39th nationally for the number of physicians per capita, this number has remained constant since 2013 (8).
- The top 3 primary care/core specialties have increased in the number of practicing physicians from 2000 - 2015 IM (35.2%), FM(33.5%), and OB/GYN (33.3%).
- Female physicians practicing in Georgia have increased by 20.7% from 2006 - 2015.
- Black and Asian physicians in Georgia have increased slightly, blacks 2.1% and Asians 4.9% since 2013.

#### Concerns:

- Georgia is ranked in the bottom 1/4 of states in the number of physicians per capita.
- General surgery showed a decrease in the number of physicians from 2000 - 2015 (15.9%).
- There are 9 Georgia counties with zero (0) physicians, this represents a population of 51,218.
- The top 3 specialties with the greatest number of counties with "0" physicians are OB/GYN (79 counties "0" physicians), General Surgery (75 counties "0" physicians), and Pediatrics (64 counties "0" physicians).
- The physician workforce is aging, 53.4% of Georgia's practicing physicians are age 50 and above.
- Although males continue to dominate the physician workforce they have progressively declined by 7.3% since 2006.

**Figure 1. Practicing Physicians per 100,000**



- Georgia has been impacted by 6 rural hospital closures as of December 2016 (6), there are currently 9 counties in Georgia with no hospitals.
- Over 50% of Georgia's rural hospitals are vulnerable to closure (6).

**Map 1. Percent of Rural Hospitals at risk of closure**



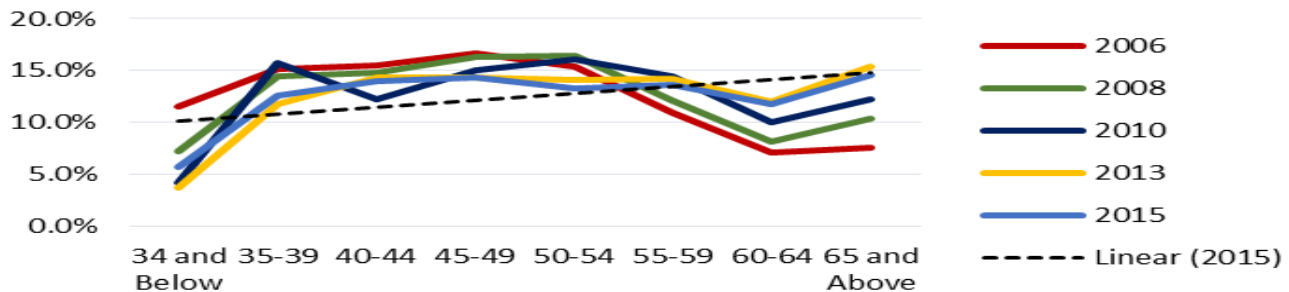
**Georgia 53%**

Alabama 34%, Florida 41%, South Carolina 50%,  
Tennessee 44%, North Carolina 31% South Carolina 50%.

## Characteristics of Georgia Physicians

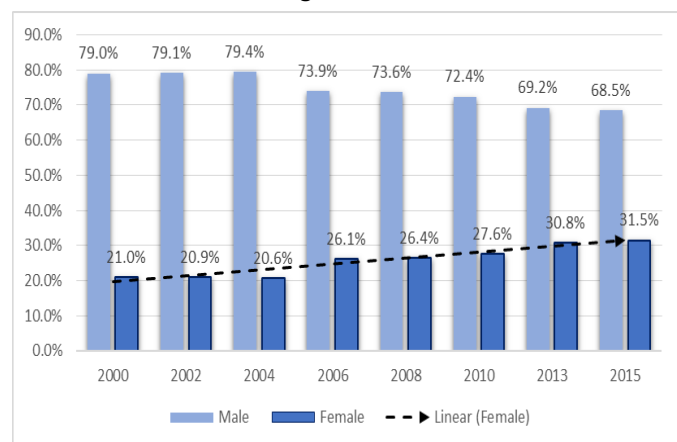
As physician demographics and characteristics change, it has a direct impact on the physician workforce and the supply of physicians in Georgia. This information is used to help the board, legislators, and community leaders make well informed decisions that can help Georgia citizens get access to healthcare. Georgia's population has increased by 24.2% since the year 2000. Any decline in physician hours worked directly impacts the physician workforce. Georgia has had an aging physician workforce for years. In 2015 53.4% of Georgia's physicians were age 50 and above compared to 33.8% in 2000.

**Figure 2. Physicians Age Distribution  
Georgia 2000—2015**



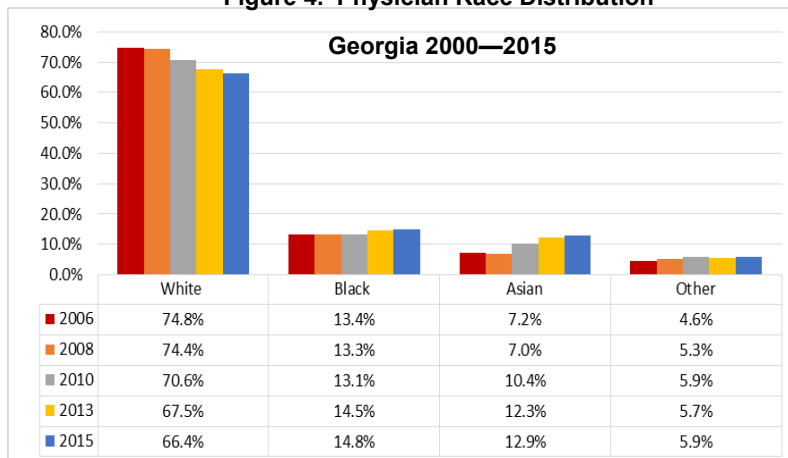
- According to the AAMC's Work Life Profiles Report, the majority of physicians work between 40 - 60 hours a week, less than 25% work 80 hours or more a week. Younger physicians desire a Work Life balance as more physicians want to enjoy leisure outside of work.
- Females are increasing their presence in the physicians workforce. Female physicians represent 31.3% of Georgia's physician workforce.
- Studies have shown as female physicians have children, they work 20% less than their colleagues, contributing to less physicians hours in the physician workforce (7).

**Figure 3. Physician Gender Distribution  
Georgia 2000—2015**



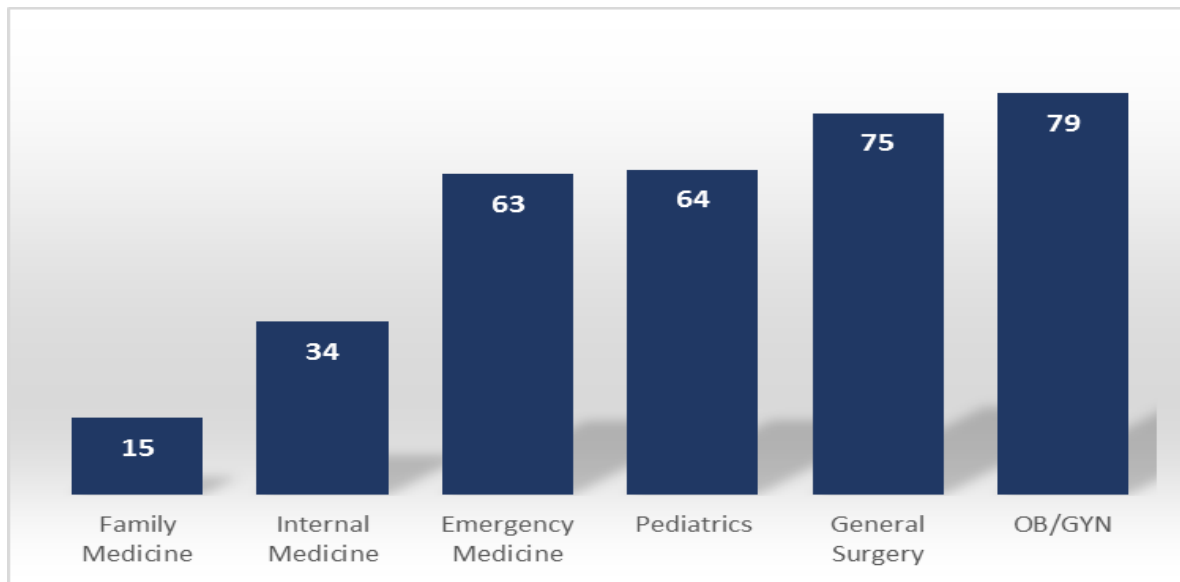
## Physician Diversity

**Figure 4. Physician Race Distribution  
Georgia 2000—2015**



- Although white physicians continue to dominate the physician workforce in Georgia, the total number of white physicians has declined over 11.2% in the past decade. Black and Asian physicians have increased by over 10%.

**Figure 5. Georgia Counties with No Physicians by Specialty, 2015**



**The specialties hardest hit by physician shortages are:**

- Emergency Medicine has 63 counties with no physicians. This represents a population of 952,587.
- Pediatrics has 64 counties with no physicians. This represents a population of 927,103.
- General Surgery has 75 counties with no physicians. This represents a population of 1,221,380.

**Table 1. Distribution of Primary Care/Core Specialties by  
MSA/Non-MSA, 2013—2015**

Specialty	2013		2015		2013		2015	
	MSA				Non-MSA			
	Physicians	Rate	Physicians	Rate	Physicians	Rate	Physicians	Rate
Family Medicine	1,976	24.5	2295	27.3	628	32.5	565	32.4
Internal Medicine	2,340	29.0	2689	31.9	414	21.4	371	21.3
Pediatrics	1,439	17.9	1582	18.8	151	7.8	158	9.1
OB/GYN	1,070	13.3	1178	13.8	157	8.1	136	7.7
General Surgery	541	6.7	536	6.7	119	6.2	112	6.4
Emergency Medicine	859	10.7	989	11.7	140	7.2	139	8.0

- Scarcity of physicians and access to healthcare are issues facing Georgia's physicians workforce in Non-MSAs. (See Table 1.)
- In 2015 only 1/4 of all Georgia physicians worked in Non-MSAs.
- Georgia has experienced growth in 5 of the 6 primary care/core specialties (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN, Emergency Medicine). General Surgery has shown a decrease in the number of physicians.

## Physicians per 100,000 Population for Select Specialties, Georgia 2013—2015

While Georgia's supply of primary care physicians has increased since 2013, there have been declines in the per capita rates of other specialties as shaded in the table below. This includes the general surgery specialty.

Table 2

Specialty Name	2013	2015
Allergy and Immunology	1.03	0.99
Anesthesiology	8.95	9.06
Cardiovascular Disease/Cardiology	7.17	7.37
Diagnostic Radiology	3.46	2.97
Emergency Medicine	10.44	11.04
Family Medicine	27.28	28.00
Gastroenterology	4.07	4.16
General Surgery	6.50	6.34
Internal Medicine	28.69	29.96
Nephrology	3.08	2.96
Neurological Surgery	1.22	1.29
Obstetrics and Gynecology	10.23	12.86
Oncology	2.78	2.82
Orthopedic Surgery	5.83	6.18
Pediatrics	16.83	17.03
Psychiatry	9.70	9.61
Pulmonary Diseases	3.10	3.28
Radiology	5.01	5.37
Rheumatology	1.12	1.13
Thoracic Surgery	0.55	0.47
Urology	2.59	2.54
<b>Total Rate per 100,000 Population in GA</b>	<b>159.65</b>	<b>165.43</b>

## Sources

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